

The Prairie Village Environmental Committee met at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday March 26, 2025 in the Prairie Village City Hall multipurpose room. The recording secretary was Nathan Kovac.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Chair Greg Shelton, Melinda Lewis, Piper Reimer, Travis Carson, Johanna Comes, Tamara McMahon, Rick Wolfarth, Magda Born, Nathan Kovac, and staff liaison Ashley Freburg.

Approval of the Agenda

Piper made a motion to approve the agenda, and Magda seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Approval of February 2025 meeting minutes

Nathan made a motion to approve the February 2025 meeting minutes. Tamara seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Presentation

Community Gardener Linda Cossgrove shared an update and requests from the Community Gardens as follows

- Prior to the start of the growing season, 11 people were on the garden waitlist. Six were accommodated with plots during the 2025 season, leaving five on the waitlist.
- The garden leadership team created a non-compliance process for those who do not maintain and upkeep their garden plots. That has been implemented for the 2025 growing season.
- The Shawnee Mission East Environmental Committee has taken over the Harmon Garden donation plot, and students are now gardening there.
- The Harmon Garden will host garden talks every third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. on various garden-related topics. These workshops will be open to the public and are a partnership with Johnson County K-State Research and Extension. The first session will be April 15 and will focus on soil conditions.
- The Harmon Park gardeners would like permission to straighten out their fence line since the tree that used to shade the garden has been removed. Removing the tree will allow for additional plots to be added to accommodate more gardeners. The request will be made of the Parks and Rec Committee.
- The Harmon Park gardeners would like to place a chain link fence around the garden in hopes of keeping rabbits and other wildlife out of the gardens. Linda presented a quote from Slagle that detailed 450 feet of 4-foot black coated chain link fence with one 4-foot gate and one 8-foot gate. The cost would be approximately \$11,000. A white vinyl fence would be double the cost. The Environmental Committee did not take action on the item.

New member introduction

Jeff Roberts was introduced as a pending new member to the committee. His appointment was set to be ratified by the city council at its next meeting.

Old Business

Budget Package – Together, the committee worked through its 2026 annual budget request. The committee’s approved budget for 2025 was \$8,000. For 2026, the committee is requesting a budget of \$10,900, for an overall increase of \$2,900. This increase includes a \$500 increase in marketing and promotions, \$500 for the community gardens to help with supplies and maintenance, and \$2,000 for a new grant program. The budget request also includes a \$100 decrease in the management reserve.

The key addition to the 2026 budget request is a pilot program for the Educational Institution Sustainability Grant. The purpose of this pilot program is to advance environmental sustainability practices in Prairie Village schools, so our children can learn more about the health, environmental, and social benefits that come with innovative and sustainable solutions for energy efficiency, landscaping, water use, and air quality. By providing a small grant to support these efforts by staff, students, and patrons, this program will engage school communities to improve the natural and built environments of Prairie Village and serve as an example to our residents and neighboring communities on how to achieve better value through an approach that equally prioritizes cost, health, and performance in the spaces and places where we live, learn, work, and play.

The proposed budget is as follows:

2026 Environmental Committee Budget		
Budget Item	Estimated Cost	Additional Info
<i>OP Recycling Extravaganza Partnership</i>	\$1,400	<i>Sponsorship costs</i>
<i>EC Info Promotions/Marketing</i>	\$1,500	<i>Initiatives/Events: VillageFest, JazzFest, Go Green, OP Recycling Extravaganza, Climate Summit sponsorship, Volunteer outreach</i>
<i>Waste Diversion Program</i>	\$3,000	<i>Composting for Village Fest and Jazz Fest</i>
<i>NEJC Shredding/E-cycle event</i>	\$1,000	<i>Sponsorship Cost</i>
<i>Supplies for Events</i>	\$500	<i>seed balls, kids craft, recycle right stickers, native plant displays</i>
<i>Community Gardens</i>	\$500	<i>Supplement residents’ efforts to make improvements, perform maintenance, and provide local food distribution from the Community Gardens in Harmon Park and Global Montessori.</i>
<i>School Sustainability Grant Program</i>	\$2,000	<i>Advance environmental sustainability practices in Prairie Village schools, so our children can learn more about the health, environmental, and social benefits that come with innovative and sustainable solutions for energy efficiency, landscaping, water use, and air quality.</i>
Total	\$9,900	
Management Reserve	\$1,000	
Grand Total	\$10,900	

Magda made a motion to approve the 2026 budget request. Rick seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

VillageFest Event Team – Nathan is spearheading the children’s craft for VillageFest. He’s looking into custom seed paper to use to create bookmarks for kids to decorate, use, and later plant. The rest of the committee’s tent at the event will be similar to previous years with the monarch photo prop, seed balls, monarch butterfly and bee experts, etc.

Volunteer Promotional Campaign Options –Ashley looked into options for advertising events and recruiting volunteers. Packages offered by the Johnson County Post were outside of the Environmental Committee’s budget capacity, so, for now, ads will continue to be placed with Meta.

Deep Roots Native Plant Sale Status – Things are set for the Deep Roots Native plant sale to be held in the parking lot of the Harmon Skate Park on Saturday April 12 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Mayor’s Monarch Pledge subcommittee will have a presence at the sale. They will set up the monarch butterfly photo prop and will give out packets of native seeds.

JazzFest food composting – Rick solicited quotes from KC Can Compost and from Compost Collective KC for proposals for composting services for JazzFest on September 6, 2025. The scope of the proposals included composting services for 3,500-4,000 attendees, drop off and set up of bins, as well as collection after the event.

Rick noted the following logistical concerns:

- Compost bins must be located in clusters, minimizing or eliminating orphan containers
- Clear, concise and visible signage is a must
- First year participation tends to be lower, as expectations are unclear and unfamiliarity is a barrier
- How will full bins be emptied?
- Communication with staff and vendors regarding composting is important
- Event composting should be promoted ahead of the event

The two proposals are summarized as follows:

KC Can Compost

- Limited KC Can Compost staff available for support on the day of the event
- Will provide a waste diversion and carbon report
- Provide signage for the event
- Has a list of available food service items for vendors to purchase from, at an additional cost
- \$819 up to qty. 25 64-gallon cans

Compost Collective KC

- Can provide a guarantee of 2-4 staff members, possibly additional staff and volunteers as we get closer
- Can provide a waste diversion and carbon report
- Staff will be on site to empty totes as necessary, with some extra totes to swap in and out
- A location for their truck is required to be easily accessible
- \$1,200 ~20 64-gallon cans + 2-4 staff

Ashley noted that the Environmental Committee's budget, as committed, did not have room to support composting at JazzFest. Greg said he would approach the city administrator to see if extra funds could be made available. The item was tabled.

New Business

There was no new business before the committee.

Announcements

1. Next meeting: April 23, 2025
2. Next deadline for the July/August Village Voice is June 5, 2025. Piper indicated she will write an article about the Buy Nothing Groups.

Adjournment

Piper made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Magda seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15